"The occasional firing of the grass in order to induce fresh growth to tempt the approach of kangaroos appears to have been a common practice among the aborigines (Meredith, Home in Tasmania, ch. vii. p. 109; Backhouse, p. 112). 'Their usual method of killing kangaroos was by surrounding a scrub, setting fire to it, and spearing the kangaroos as they came out' (Davies, p. 412). This method is thus described by Holman, the blind traveller (IV. ch. xii. pp. 405-6): 'One of their modes of hunting the kangaroo is generally as successful as it is ingenious. Having discovered a spot to which they know a number of these animals resort, they make a fire round it, taking care to leave two or three openings by which they may endeavour to escape; they then station themselves at these places, and on the animals attempting to pass, they spear them with such dexterity, that few are ever permitted to escape. They use similar means when any of these [112] animals are found on a small hill, by making a fire round its base. This practice, however, is rather neglected of late, since they have become acquainted with the use of dogs, . . . which they invariably treat with great kindness from a consciousness of their value.' West says (II. pp. 85-86), regarding the chase by aid of dogs, the aborigines ran nearly abreast of them: stimulated them by imitating the cry of the kangaroo, and were generally in at the death. Entrapping by fire was not their only method of

capturing the kangaroos. White (Evid. p. 53) reports that once in May, 1803, while hoeing near a creek, he saw '300 of the natives come down in a circular form and a flock of kangaroos hemmed in between them; . . . they had no spears with them, only waddies; they were hunting.'"

1: Roth--112 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 224

"Lloyd's account of such a hunt is quite graphic: 'When but a boy, I passed many happy days in following the chase with those primitive children of the woods, who took great delight in teaching me to wield the quivering spear and whistling waddie.... The method of capturing the forest kangaroo... was exceedingly interesting and exciting. On sighting their prey, the most skilful hunter instantly dropped to the earth, and creeping alternately on hands, knees, and stomach, behind trees and stumps... --now insinuating his supple body through the high grass, like a wily snake, until he had successively arrived within thirty or forty yards of the unwary victim--he would carefully raise himself up behind the trunk of a tree presenting the best point of attack, when, poising the fatal weapon, he bounded towards his prey with the agility of a panther, and hurling the spear, seldom failed in transfixing the poor animals. Their mode of hunting in the ferns, scrubs, and underwood, was by clearing a patch of about twenty feet square. Men, women, and children then distributed themselves in a large circle, and advancing towards the cleared space drove the game--brush, kangaroo, wallaby, and bandicoot--indiscriminately to the slaughter' (p. 45)."

1: Roth--112-113 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 224, 462, 481

"The catching of an opossum was a more difficult matter. West (II. p. 85) says: 'The opossum was hunted by the women, who by a glance discovered if the animal were to be found in the tree,' and Backhouse (p. 172) refers to such a hunt in the following terms: 'The climbing of the lofty smooth-trunked gum trees, by the women to obtain opossums, which lodge in the hollows of decayed branches, is one of the most remarkable feats I ever witnessed.' Davies (p. 413) describes the capture in this way: 'The natives, especially the women, get opossums by climbing trees. Their senses [113] of seeing and hearing are particularly acute, and a glance will suffice to tell them when there is an opossum in the tree. They always carried with them a small rope, made of kangaroo sinews, and their mode of climbing the trees was as follows: They first, as high as they could conveniently reach, cut a notch with a sharp stone in the side of the tree, then threw the bight of the rope up, and leaning back, it held against the tree by their weight, until with its assistance the climber got his right great toe into the notch that had been cut; then grasping the tree with his left arm, the rope by a sudden jerk is thrown higher up the tree, a fresh notch is cut for the left toe, and so the climber proceeds. If branches interfere, they are a hindrance to the climber, but he then throws the end of the rope over it, and holding both ends raises himself up.'"

"According to Lloyd (pp. 46-47): 'The method of catching the climbing opossum... is, notwithstanding the imminent danger which attends it, an extremely interesting sight to mere bystanders. The thrilling exclamation of "Wah! Wah! Wah!" denoting that traces had been discovered of the cat-taloned animal having very recently ascended the tree, soon brought other natives to the spot: whereupon--the most cunning in such matters deciding in council that the impressions made on the smooth bark were of the preceding night--one of the boldest and most agile of the hunters prepared to ascend the formidable-looking blue gum. The flint tomahawk and the strong hay-band supplied the want of a ladder. ... The strong wire-grass rope, made into close three-strand plait, being passed round the tree and tied in a loop sufficiently large, the native placed himself within it; then with his tomahawk he made a slightly roughed score in the bark, into which, inserting his muscular great toe only, he steadily and unerringly raised himself upright. The band was then dexterously jerked higher up the trunk; another score made and so on, until he had succeeded in reaching the required height. The scores or steps were never less than three feet and a half apart. Having scaled the tree, the next feat was to follow the tracks of the opossum along some bare projecting branch; upon which the native walked upright and confident, as if he also resided amidst the boughs of towering gums. The snug domicile of the opossum being discovered, the ticklish operation came of thrusting

in the bare arm into the hollowed branch, pulling him out by the tail, and tossing him from the dizzy height into the midst of the eager hunters who were assembled round the tree. Frequently, [114] however, the wary little animal... would retreat from its nest, and perching itself... at the extreme end of the branch, would remain till fairly shaken off by its ruthless pursuer.' 'When the opossum was got out of a hole in the tree, they would knock its head against the tree and throw it down. Those below would catch it up if not dead' (Thirkell). Bass, although he did not see an opossum hunted, considered that the trees were climbed by means of the rope, 'for once, at the foot of a notched tree, about eight feet of a two inch rope made of grass was found with a knot in it, near which it appeared to have broken' (Collins, p. 169). He also had seen notched trees (ibid, p. 188). Tasman and his crew, in 1642, had also seen these notches, and reported them to be five feet apart (Gell, II. pp. 323-325)."

1: Roth--114 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 224, 262, 481, 462

"'Adhering to the rocks... the Mutton-fish are met with abundantly. These are often taken in deep water by the native women, who dive for them, and force them from the rocks by means of a wooden chisel. They put them into an oval bag, and bring them up suspended round their necks' (Backhouse, p. 103). The same author continues, on another occasion: 'In the afternoon we went... on a fishing excursion.... Some of the women went into the water among the large sea-tangle, to take crayfish. These women seem quite at home in the water, and frequently immerse their faces to enable them to see objects at the bottom. When they discover the object of their search, they dive, often using the long stems of the kelp to enable them to reach the bottom; these they handle as dexterously in descending as a sailor would a rope in ascending' (Backhouse, p. 168)."

1: Roth--114-115
116, 224, 412

(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

"One of the French explorers saw the wooden chisels being made. 'We [115] observed some of the savages employed in cutting little bits of wood in the form of a spatula, and smoothing them with a shell, for the purpose of separating from the rocks limpets or sea-ears, on which they feast' (La Billardière, II. ch. x. p. 52)."

116, 224

"At times fish were speared for sport only, and such pastime is thus described by Lloyd (pp. 50-52): 'On one of these occasions [corroboree] ... the black and white auditory were informed by the head warrior that a "big one fish spear um" (fish hunt) would come off on the following morning, ... not with the object of obtaining food, but merely as a matter of sport.... The locality chosen for the sport was called Sweet Water Bay. At high-water its greatest depth did not exceed three feet for upwards of one-third of a mile from the shore. Its waters literally teemed with the dangerous ray-fish. The preparation for the onslought upon the finny monsters commenced by simultaneous entry into the water of the whole assembled tribes, men, women, and children, numbering upwards of 300, who, dividing, entered at two different points, distant from each other about 250 yards, and continued to wade out until they had formed themselves into a half circle; then, with their long sticks furiously beating the water, accompanied with frantic yells, and other unearthly sounds, they generally succeeded in retaining within the goal numbers of the dreaded fish. The serried cordon having so far completed their work, a few of the most active and skilful young savages, each armed with the keen-edged tomahawk and two heavy barbed spears, boldly entered the scene of action. Quickly discovering their devoted prey, they cast the deadly weapon; the awkward fish, writhing and plunging, darted along the surface of the water; ... but the firmly-planted spear once

grasped by the muscular hand of the excited hunter, the victim was soon hauled to the shore and finally despatched.... After having satisfied their warrior-propensities by destroying numbers of those dangerous creatures, the hunters would retire to their camp-fires and regale themselves upon the usual coast fare, oysters and steaming opossum.'"

1: Roth--123 [2] (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 177, 231, 224

"Davies (p. 418) remarks: 'They have no domestic animals, unless a young tamed kangaroo could be esteemed such; and it is much to be doubted, whether, in their wild state, they even had this. Of later years they have had dogs.' These dogs, according to Backhouse (p. 85), 'were highly valued by their owners, who obtained them from Europeans, there being originally no wild dogs in Van Diemen's Land.' Widowson also tells us (p. 190) that the aborigines 'roam about at will, followed by a pack of dogs, of different sorts and sizes, which are used principally for hunting. He adds (ibid.) a curious fact in connection with their fondness for these animals, namely, that the 'females are frequently known to suckle a favourite puppy instead of the child.'"